

# OF INTEREST to WOMEN

## The Charming Bagobos

### Miss Benedict Finds "Loveliest People on Earth" on a Far-Away Philippine Island.

"The Bagobos," said Miss Benedict enthusiastically, "are just the loveliest people on the face of the earth. They are beautiful to look at and charming to talk to, with the sweetest dispositions of any people I ever knew. Come, you must see my collection the first thing."

So, still talking joyously of the charms of the Bagobos, she led the reporter down into the Philippine Hall in the Museum of Natural History, for she is the Miss Benedict—Miss Laura Watson Benedict, to be exact—who has returned from her visit to Uncle Sam's new protégés with such a fine collection of native laces and penates that they have been purchased gratefully by the museum, and fill all the left hand side of Philippine Hall.

"Of course you know," she explained, "that my Bagobos are not at all like the people in the northern islands, who have been so influenced by the Spanish possession. My people live eight hundred miles south of Manila, in the southern part of the island of Mindanao, which is next to the largest of all the Philippine group. The island is mountainous and quite inaccessible, so that few civilized people have ever been there. The natives speak a pure Malay dialect, without a touch of Spanish. I had to go to them through the jungle, with my guides cutting a path for me, and I was the first white woman they had ever seen. Yet they treated me beautifully."

Manners and social customs are charming. You would call them savages. I suppose, but I feel that they are so refined by nature that I felt we were on the same social plane all the time. The only barrier was language, but I soon learned that."

"Of course, the methods of their society are different from ours. The spirit is the same, only finer. I sometimes think, for instance, of course, it is funny—it was just a sweet bit of courtesy on the part of a chieftain's son when he found a particularly tender piece of meat on his plate to pick it out and give it to me, and, of course, I accepted it in the spirit in which it was given. We had boiled potatoes, too, for supper that first night as we sat on the floor in the chieftain's tent, and the whole family insisted on taking turns in peeling mine. As they used the one knife which served for all the necessary operations of the household, I did not enjoy those potatoes, and I finally convinced them that I liked potatoes in their jackets—it was American style. They respected my peculiarities, and I did theirs, and we got along beautifully."

"Yes, I was all alone with them. I went out to study them, not sent by any institution, but just because I was interested in them. All my life I had been watching for a new field in anthropology to work up, and at the St. Louis Exposition I became interested in the exhibits of these people. I was with them two years, but I could easily have stayed ten—there is so much to learn about them, and it must be done at once, for soon civilization will be reaching them, and then all their beautiful customs will be lost and they will be spoiled. Civilization at first always takes away the best in a people, and gives them only its baser elements—immorality, greed and deceitfulness."

"What are the people like? Well, they are beautiful. The men are slim and straight, and with faces of fine form, clear cut and intelligent—not like the lower savage types at all. And the women? Well, I did march in the suffrage parade the other day, but I won't admit that the women are a bit more than the men. They are pretty and plump, and they have a dear, sweet expression. They thought I was a queer specimen, I suppose, but they were always gracious and eager to tell me the things I wanted to know."

In Philippine Hall the reporter was shown cases full of dull red garments with soft wavy designs in black and white, and cases full of beads and brass jewelry. These comprise the Bagobo costume. But hear Miss Benedict describe it:

"The costume is so picturesque," she cried, "and beautiful because it is appropriate. It never changes, only grows more beautiful with the increasing skill of the women who make it, for fashion never changes. They don't have to have new fashions just to keep the mills going, the way we do."

"The skirt is plain like a bag. It just goes around the hips. The folds are gathered together in front and doubled over at the top, so that they stay out from the body. The women wear this little straight jacket with short sleeves. It leaves a little rim of bare brown skin at the waist, but that is all right. It harmonizes with the soft red of the garments. Round her neck are all the chains of beads she can get, eight or ten sometimes. Fastened to one of these is her toothbrush. See, here is one in this case—a bunch of long black bristles from some animal. The toothbrush is always handy and never comes away from the woman just because it is gracefully across her teeth. That is why their teeth are so beautiful and white. The women cover their arms with bracelets, of course, and carry little beaded baskets with their embroidery, and big baskets over their backs for bringing in corn from the fields."

"These strings of raffia with knots tied in them are the native memorandum books. The number of knots represents the number of days before the engagement, and the owner cuts off one knot every day. When they are all gone he knows it's time to go hunting, or start his sowing, or mail his wife's letter when he goes to town."

"Of course, all the weaving and beading of garments is done by the women. I have a few specimens of unfinished work, showing different stages in the processes, but I

had a hard time getting them. The women hated to let an unfinished piece escape her. 'It makes me sick,' she would say. 'Then I would have to make her a present. That is medicine, and then she would yield.' The skirts are woven with different colored threads, but the process of making the designs on the square red handkerchiefs and jackets is quite unique. The design is marked off with beading threads, then along these lines little bunches of the material are caught up and wound tightly with coarse thread. Then the piece is dipped in red vegetable dye. The threads are cut from the little bunches, and a bare white spot untouched by the dye is exposed, thus leaving the design in white against a red background.

The village life, though more charming to Miss Benedict than polite society in America, is very simple. The food is largely vegetarian. The people rise late in the morning because the nights are so beautiful they have to sit up to enjoy them. On rainy nights they gather round the fire and talk. Here again an unusual charm manifested itself to the American woman. No one ever interrupted. Any one who was moved might talk for two hours, and whether he had anything to say or not, he was never interrupted with. The conversation was limited in scope, being largely of little personal affairs, but rude gossip was never heard. Nobody ever hurt the orator's feelings by saying he had talked too long. Pushing and crowding and such vulgar performances were quite impossible in this perfect society and mobs or gang rule unknown.

Even among the children the exuberance of healthy young animal spirits was held in check by this instinct for gentle, sedate demeanor. In the school which Miss Benedict taught for a while in order to become familiar with the child life, although there were ninety children in one small room, she had no trouble with discipline.

"Of course," she confessed, "United States ideas of order couldn't be insisted upon. The children might jump over the desks on their way to the front of the room to receive, but that didn't matter. They were interested in their lessons, and were just trying to get there quickly. They never fought each other or me."

"The government establishes these schools everywhere, and the children enjoy them—that is, for the most part. They can't see any sense in arithmetic, because they have fingers and toes to count on. But they love the stories in the school reading books and they love to write daily themes. This could cover page after page any day with a mixture of English and Malay about chickens or birds or trees and flowers. They are naturally very observant, their minds not being filled with a lot of useless formulas and dead facts. They know every bird that flies and every berry that is good to eat. I learned as much from them, I am sure, as they did from me."

"The poor little things have one affliction that white children have, only it is much more serious—that is measles. It was introduced by the Spaniards and is fatal to the natives. The little boys would be sick and out of school. 'What is it?' I would ask. 'Sarapian!' came the answer dolefully from their mates. I found out that 'sarapian' was nothing but our measles, yet the native children would be uncon-

scious a few hours and then die. No one—not even doctors who go there—knows what to do for them, as measles with us are so harmless it has never been necessary to hunt for a remedy. That is another example of what civilization does to savage peoples. It brings them troubles with which they are unable to cope."

"Of course they are learning English and getting rich through trade. In time the individual will benefit, but I'm afraid the tribal life will be lost. Already they are buying cotton cloth and neglecting their beautiful native weaving."

"About the United States government? My dear, the Bagobos are most discreet. We must be, too. In my company they were always careful to say the most complimentary things about us."

**CEDAR CHESTS.**  
Cedar chests in all sizes and styles and at all prices are being shown in the shops. They range from the simple box of stained mahogany with a lid, at \$7, to the mahogany dresser-like affair at \$25. This latter is three feet high and two deep, with a beautiful mahogany grain. The top lifts up, revealing a sliding tray affair in two parts. Below this are a couple of drawers. This handsome piece of furniture would be invaluable in an apartment where there is no safe storage for the winter valuables.

**CORONATION FURS AT DEBENHAM'S.**  
At the present moment Messrs. Debenham & Freebody, of Wigmore Street, London, are busily engaged in making up the furs that will be used on the wonderful Royal Robes that will be worn by the King and Queen at the forthcoming Coronation. The fur that is used is the finest Royal Ermine which is symmetrically spotted with thousands of small pieces of Black Fur, known under the brand name of Black Fur, known under the brand name of Black Fur.

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MRS. FREDERICK NATHAN.  
(Photograph by Almé Dupont.)

MISS MARY DREIER.

MISS ANNE MORGAN.

## TONGUES IN TREES

### Barnard Seniors Spout Poetry Among Rose Bushes.

"And this our life exempt from public haunt," quoted the Barnard senior, "finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

"Yes, it's all perfectly appropriate, except that about the books in the running brooks. Our books are all over in the library, and Miss Weeks is running Brooks just as usual. But tongues in the trees! Just you watch and see the east crawl through rose bushes spouting poetry!"

The very irreverent young person who spoke was an usher in cap and gown at the outdoor performance of "As You Like It," which took place on the lawn in front of Brooks Hall, the Barnard College dormitory, last night. The cast were all seniors, and they entered into the performance and the rain-drenched rose bushes with an abandon characteristic of those over whom hang no more examinations, no more faculty recommendations and no more herds of Columbia youths in the windows overlooking the Barnard campus. It was night, and the darkness covered a multitude of feminine shepherdesses and dukes and fools all in homemade brown and green canopies "masculine usurped attire."

The part of Rosalind was played with all its traditional roughness by Miss Frances Randolph, who improved, in fact, on tradition by cutting out all the lines which were not humorous and treating the audience to one rollicking scene after another, with no dreary wastes of rhetoric such as sometimes accompany Shakespearean perform-

## Women Fire Fighters

### As Members of Committee on Safety They Are Working to Protect Lives of Toilers.

It was a woman—Miss Mary Dreier, president of the Woman's Trade Union League—who after the great fire in the Triangle Waist Company's factory in the Asch Building, in Washington Place, was most active in arranging the parade in memory of the victims, forming a committee for the relief of their families and starting agitation for measures to guard against like tragedies in the future.

It was a woman—Miss Anne Morgan—who was instrumental in securing the Metropolitan Opera House for the mass meeting of April 2, the one out of which the New York Committee on Safety grew. Naturally, therefore, when this committee was organized these two women were a part of it. There are two other women members—Miss Lillian D. Wald, head worker of the Henry Street Settlement, and Mrs. Frederick Nathan, president of the New York City Consumers' League. Miss Morgan and Miss Dreier are on the executive committee; Mrs. Nathan and Miss Wald are on the board of directors. Miss Wald was at the head of the joint board of sanitary control in shops, but never before has it come from the inside. And the reason the garment makers can do it is that they are so well organized. They are not alone on the board; with them are representatives of the Manufacturers' Protective Association and three representatives of the public—William J. Schiefelin, Dr. Henry Moskowitz and myself.

"The manufacturers were willing to come in, then, and work for better conditions in their own shops?"

"Yes; and they have paid a large share of the expenses of the investigation. The board has been and is conducting. Manufacturers aren't all heartless. Some of them are very negligent. One complaint the joint board received was from a girl who said that in the shop where she worked there were no lights on the narrow stairways down which the employees made their way to the street at the close of the day's work. The workers would stumble down, lighting matches to guide themselves, and throwing them to the floor."

"It has been said that American enthusiasm is a bundle on a cake of ice," she

## MME. CHERUIT,

21 PLACE VENDOME, PARIS.

begs to inform her American clientele that the rumors concerning her alleged "ill health" and consequent "retirement from business" that have been circulated by obviously misinformed persons, are absolutely false and without foundation in fact.

Mme. Cheruit further informs her patrons that, as in the past, the models now being designed in her establishment for display during the ensuing season are the individualized expression of her personal ideas.

passage of some of the fire protection bills now before the Legislature. About thirty of these bills are pending.

"It was a blow to the committee to have Henry L. Stimson, its president, called to Washington by President Taft. I don't know," Mrs. Nathan added, "who will be found to take his place."

"I am going to remain abroad four months or so, and I shall more or less lose touch with the committee until next fall. But I hope it is going to be instrumental in fixing the control of matters relating to public safety in some definite department. And I hope it will succeed in passing and in having enforced a stringent law against overcrowding the workers in factories."

"Another thing I very much want to see accomplished is the appointing of a legislative investigating committee to look into the conditions surrounding buildings where numbers of persons are employed. A bill for the formation of such a committee has been introduced at Albany, and I hope it will pass both houses."

"I look to the labor unions for reform," Miss Dreier said, when seen at the rooms of the Woman's Trade Union League, No. 43 East 22d street. "Other people must help, but it is the workers that are interested, and they must grow strong through organization and change the laws through investigation and change the laws."

"Conditions in many of the factories we have investigated are alarming—dark, doors which should be open to allow free egress are kept locked and windows locked or barred, halls dark, fire escapes obstructed, workrooms full to overflowing with wooden tables, heaps of inflammable scraps left for weeks to accumulate."

"It hasn't been easy to locate these bad conditions, for girls are afraid as a rule to complain—afraid of losing their jobs. They need to be afraid, for we exercise the greatest secrecy here at the league about the names of those who report bad conditions."

Miss Morgan, fourth woman member of the committee on safety, is one of the most active. She has never missed a meeting.

**CLUB AND SOCIAL NOTES.**  
Miss Amelia Summerville will give another of her "Beauty Talks and Demonstrations of Toilet Preparations" to the Professional Women's League at their headquarters, No. 122 Broadway. A business meeting will be held on June 12, and the regular progressive lecture will be held on June 13 and 14. On June 25 the league will hold a June social.

A musical festival and country tea will be given at Sheepshead Bay Park on Saturday, June 4, from 1 to 3 o'clock, for the benefit of the Summer Home for Crippled Children and the establishment of a certain milk station in Brooklyn. The festival will be held at 1 to 3 o'clock.

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A GROUP OF BAGOBOS.

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